To The Master.

Pam. 5

THE

DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON,

A SEATONIAN PRIZE POEM,

BY

THE REV. ARTHUR WILLIAM TROLLOPE, M.A.
OF PEMBROKE HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

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MDCCXCV.

TO

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL RICHARD CLARK, ALDN.

PRESIDENT,

THE WORSHIPFUL WILLIAM GILL, ALDN.

TREASURER,

AND THE GOVERNORS OF CHRIST'S HOSPITAL,

THE FOLLOWING POEM,

AS A SMALL TESTIMONY OF GRATITUDE

FOR HIS EDUCATION RECEIVED UNDER THEIR CARE,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

ELTHAM,
NOV. 1795.

THE

DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON,

A POEM.

JEHOVAH's mercies to his choſen ſeed
Repentant, and Chaldæa's iron yoke
From Judah loos'd; with retribution juſt
And tenfold vengeance on th' Oppreſſor's head,
And Babylon a deſolated waſte;
Theſe are the Muſe's theme. Spirit of Truth,
Conduct my ſteps, that ſtrangers to the haunts
Of Poeſy would tempt the magic ſoil
Of Fiction's airy realm; and while I ſing

Of deeds Almighty, let no fabled tale,
Or viſion fancy-born, intruſive mix,
And taint the ſacred current of my verſe.
Yet what can Fancy, tho' on fearleſs wing
She ſpurn Earth's limits, and o'er Nature's verge
Thro' worlds unnumber'd her creative eye
Range uncontroul'd; yet what can Fancy add
To grace His name, whoſe loweſt wonder ſoars
Beyond Imagination's loftieſt flight,
Far as Heaven's concave, where enthron'd He ſits
In Majeſty eternal, is uprais'd
Above His footſtool, this terreſtrial globe.

GREAT is the Lord and mighty; or to raiſe
The chain-worn captive from the dungeon's gloom,
And with imperial ſplendors veſt his brow;
Or pluck the blood-ſtain'd Tyrant from his throne,
And break his lawleſs ſceptre. In His hand
Is pois'd the ſcale of Empire; and when Vice,
Bold and triumphant lifts her ſhameleſs form,
And drooping Virtue hangs her penſive head,
Neglected, ſcorn'd, inſulted; at His word
Deſcend the ſwift-wing'd miniſters of wrath,
Arm'd with ten thouſand plagues: Deſtruction then

O'erhangs

O'erhangs the fated people; coward Fear
Freezes the Warrior's heart, unſtrings his nerves,
And from his languid arm the lifted ſpear
Falls innocent: ſhook from its faithleſs baſe
The turret trembles, and the bulwark nods;
Sinks the proud palace, the aſpiring dome,
The cloud-encircled ſpire: dreary and ſad
The city one wide ruin ſmokes around.

Oft had rebellious Iſrael bow'd the knee
At Baal's altar; and with foul revolt
Provoked Almighty vengeance. Oft for this
Before Philiſtia's conquering ſword they fled,
And ſad Judea wept her fertile ſoil
Fed with her warrior's blood, her cities thinn'd
By the wild havoc of devouring war.
For this the Peſtilence that walks by night
Veil'd in a cloud of darkneſs, breathing round
Contagious death unſeen;—for this pale Famine,
Parent of Horrors, whoſe dread voice can ſtill
The cries of nature in the mother's breaſt,
And nerve her lifted arm againſt her babe
Liſping for mercy;—thro' the guilty land
Spread Deſolation wide. Yet not at once

Pour'd God his whole diſpleaſure, or forgot
His covenant with righteous Abraham made:
But oft His Prophets rais'd to purge the miſts
Of error from His people, to renew
Their broken faith, and in their ſouls awake
Repentance; or with warning voice denounce
Impending judgements, and ſeverer woes,
Judea's loſs and ſtrange captivity,
The fruit of Diſobedience. Blind, perverſe,
Deluded Iſrael! whom no ills endur'd,
Or fear of ills to come, can ſave from ruin.
Ev'n now the hoſtile myriads preſs thy plains
Innumerable, and round Sion's hill
Burns the collected war: Ev'n now thy walls,
Jeruſalem, disjointed whelm the ground;
And from thy holy temple, God's own houſe,
The aſcending flame gleams horrible: Alas!
From that dread pile how chang'd, whoſe ſacred walls
The Shechinah, refulgent effluence
Of God Himſelf, illumin'd; while around
The ſons of Judah, rapt with pious awe,
Proſtrate in grateful adoration bow'd.
Low lie its glories in the duſt, a heap
Of ſmoky ruins; and its ſacred ſtores

Muſt

Muſt grace th' intemperate feaſt, whoſe riot rends
The Victor's palace. From their country torn,
Torn from their native land, thy captive ſons
And widow'd mothers drag the galling chain
Indignant;—and, as Jordan's banks along
The ſad proceſſion winds, their penſive boſoms
Beat; while with oft-reverted eye tearful
On Sion's leſſening hill they gaze, or print
With agonizing lips, while yet 'tis giv'n,
A laſt fond kiſs on their parental ſoil.

Now ſeventy times the radiant Orb of Day
Had thro' the Ecliptic run his annual courſe,
Since Iſrael groan'd in bondage, and the ſcourge
Of their Chaldæan Lords relentleſs urg'd
The toil unceaſing. Leſs ſevere the yoke
Borne by their fathers in the Memphian coaſts,
When God by Moſes His dread wonders wrought,
And with a mighty hand and outſtretch'd arm
Led forth His people. Deep repentance touch'd
Their ſouls and keen remorſe; in anguiſh ſunk
They mourn'd their paſt tranſgreſſions. By the ſide *
Of Babylon's proud ſtream they ſate, and wept
Thy fate, Jeruſalem; while fond remembrance

Dwelt

* PSALM CXXXVII.

Dwelt on thy glories paſt, and happier ſcenes
With preſent ills compar'd. Upon the willows,
That o'er the current bow'd their drooping heads,
Their ſilent harps, that erſt the jocund dance
Awaken'd, or devotion's ſacred flame
Breath'd in the kindling ſoul, untun'd were hung,
And on the liſtening organs pour'd no more
The notes of melody. The foe meanwhile
Pointed the cruel taunt; and with proud ſcoff,
And wanton blaſphemy embitter'd more
The cup of Miſery. Thou ſaw'ſt, O God,
Their tears unfeign'd; Thou ſaw'ſt their deep contrition:
Thine ear, ſtill open to the ſinner's prayer
Pour'd from the fulneſs of a wounded heart,
Accepted their repentance. For Thou, Lord,
Art ſlow to wrath; and in Thy Juſtice ſtill
Remembereſt Mercy:—Interceſſor ſweet!
Whoſe potent voice arreſts the vengeful bolt
Wing'd with a nation's ruin, when Thy arm
Uplifted o'er a guilty land threatens
Deſtruction. But more boldly eloquent,
With more perſuaſive confidence She charms,
When ſinful man with penitential tears
Bewails his errors, and returning woos

Forſaken Virtue. So for Iſrael now
She pleads, nor pleads in vain: well-pleas'd Thine ear
Inclines, and at her mediating voice
Expires Thy anger: Thou forgav'ſt their Sins,
And at Thy word the ſwift avenger comes,
Whoſe arm ſhall break th' Oppreſſor's rod, and looſe
The bonds of Judah, and his ſons redeem'd
To freedom and their native land reſtore.

MEANWHILE upon the giddy height of power
Blaz'd, meteor-like, the Babylonian, drunk
With flattery's intoxicating draught;
And while his eye, wide-ſtretching from the Eaſt
O'er many a tributary realm, in vain
Would graſp the limits of his boundleſs ſway,
He moves in thought a God; and fondly deems
His throne thro' time's vaſt ages ſhall endure,
Fix'd and unſhaken as the Solar Orb.
Vain boaſt! What is the city's tower'd ſtrength,
Unleſs the Lord uphold her? Or the force
Of countleſs hoſts, preſſing th' embattled plain
Thick as autumnal leaves,—againſt His arm
Is but the vernal Zephyr's gentleſt breeze
Againſt the foreſt-rending tempeſt; but a ſound

That

That faintly vibrates on the liſtening ear,
To the loud peal convulſing Nature's frame.

* With feſtive mirth reſounds the regal dome,
And Luxury decks the banquet. On his throne
Exalted, proud Belſhazzar ſate: around
A thouſand Nobles watch his envied ſmile,
And on his ear, more grateful than the ſound
Of heav'nly Muſic raviſhing the ſoul,
Breathe adulation bland. Pride ſwells his heart;
And in deriſion of Jehovah's name,
The God of captive Iſrael, from his ſtores
The conſecrated veſſels he commands,
The ſpoil of Sion's temple. Yet, forbear!
Ere the full meaſure of thy ſins o'erflow,
And rouſe not ſlumbering vengeance! No; 'tis done:
See the baſe herd of fawning ſycophants,
See the lewd train of wanton concubines,
Taint with polluted lips the hallow'd gold;
And as they quaff th' intemperate juice extol
Their Idol Gods! What means that ſudden ſtart?
Why drops the untaſted goblet from his lip?
And flies the colour from his dead-pale cheek?
Trembles his frame convuls'd? And on yon wall
His

* DANIEL CH. V.

His ſtraining eye fix'd motionleſs? Ah! there
The hand of Heaven in myſtic characters
Pourtrays his fall. From Elam God hath call'd
His ſervant, and the ſlaughtering ſword no more
Shall join the peaceful ſcabbard, till its charge
Appointed ends; till Babylon is fallen.
What tho' with walls impenetrable girt,
Broad, lofty, vaſt, ſtupendous, ſhe deride
The ſhock of hoſtile engines; tho' within
Their ample circuit golden harveſts wave,
And flocks and herds the verdant paſture graze,
Mocking the threats of Famine; She muſt fall.
Vain is her ſtrength, her towering bulwarks vain,
The boaſt of ages: while ſecure She ſleeps,
All heedleſs of the ſtorm prepar'd to burſt
On her devoted head, the faithleſs ſtream
Its wonted courſe forgets, and to the foe
An eaſy paſſage yields. Hark! in her ſtreets
Where the gay voice of joy and revelry
Caught the rapt ear, the loud tumultuous ſhout
Burſts frequent, and from twice ten thouſand tongues
Pour'd clamorous the cry of victory rings:
While in her walls, her ſafeguard late and pride,
As in a hunter's toil, her warriors pent,

Without the power to ſtand or hope to fly,
Periſh an eaſy, unreſiſting prey.

She falls, the Queen of Nations; Babylon,
The pride, the glory of the Earth is fallen.
Paſs but a few ſhort years, no veſtige left
Shall to the curious traveller point the ſpot,
From which She awed the kingdoms. As his eye
Explores the banks, where Tigris rolls his tide,
Vainly inquiſitive, no mould'ring pile,
No fractur'd column, and no ſtoried arch
Amid the deſolated waſte ſhall riſe
To aid the fruitleſs ſearch. There never more *
Shall human form an habitation fix,
Nor there the roving Arab pitch his tent;
No Shepherd there ſhall tend his fleecy charge,
Or way-worn Pilgrim reſt his weary feet;
But leave with quicken'd ſtep the joyleſs ſcene,
Scared by the lonely Screech-owl's boding note,
The hiſs of dragons, and the monſters' yell.

Is this the once imperial Babylon?
This the proud miſtreſs of the Eaſt? Become
A nameleſs waſte, where ſcarce a ruin marks

Her

* ISAIAH XIII. 20.

Her ample ſite? Here, Albion, turn thy view,
Thou, who like her lift'ſt the aſpiring head,
Learn wiſdom from her fall: ſo may'ſt thou 'ſcape
A fate like her's. Tho' borne from every clime,
Which in his ceaſeleſs courſe th' all-ſeeing Sun
Chears with his genial, life-imparting beam,
The riches of the world are all thine own;
Tho' launch'd from many a port in gallant pride
Thy floating bulwarks preſs th' aſtoniſh'd deep,
And pour their vollied thunders round the globe;
Place not in theſe thy ſtrength: More firm than theſe
Doth Virtue's power endure, and Righteouſneſs
On ſurer baſe exalt a nation's fame.
But if ſupine, and ſunk in Vice's arms
Lethargic, thou forgett'ſt th' Almighty hand,
That gave thy greatneſs birth; if with the power
The impious pride of Babylon be thine,
And all her thouſand ſins of ſcarlet dye;
Thine is her puniſhment: tho' guardian rocks
Of perpendicular, direct aſcent,
Steep, inacceſſible, ſhould round thy ſhores
Continuous riſe, ſcoffing th' Invader's toil;
Should triple walls of ſolid adamant
Encircle, engine-proof, thy cities; ſhould

Thy ſons beyond ev'n Number's endleſs tale
Be multiplied, and every ſinew ſtrung
With more than giant force; ev'n in thy pride,
Ev'n in the boaſted fulneſs of thy might,
Perdition, like the whirlwind's winged blaſt,
Arreſts thee. Say, as lull'd on Pleaſure's breaſt
Thou lieſt, in gay deluſive dreams entranc'd,
Old joys exhauſting and inventing new;
What if, as erſt on Sodom's guilty land,
Pour'd from ſulphureous clouds in horrid ſhower
Deſcend the fiery tempeſt? What if Earth
Even to the centre cleft, diſparting wide
Engulph thy cities in the deep abyſs?
What if the Voice, at which th' obedient ſeas
Were gather'd to their place, and ocean chain'd
Within his ſhores preſcrib'd, ſhould bid again
The congregated waters paſs their bounds,
Pouring their floods impetuous o'er the land
With ruinous inundation? Yet ev'n then,
Tho' riſing waters whelm the ſubject plains;
Tho' the riv'n Earth within its yawning womb
Entomb thy guilty ſons; tho' angry Heaven
In ſtreaming cataracts of liquid fire
Rain down combuſtion inextinguiſhable;

Yet

Yet haply ſhould be found ſome choſen few,
Who, unpolluted 'midſt a Nation's ſins,
Pure and unſpotted ſtemm'd the tide of Vice;
For theſe His ſervants ſhall the Lord prepare
An Ark of ſafety in the day of wrath;
Or by His guiding Angel lead them forth,
Ere burſts the ſtorm, into ſome ſheltering Zoar.

BRITISH
3 OCT 93
MUSEUM

A Clause of Mr. SEATON's Will.

Dated *Oct.* 8, 1738.

I Give my Kiſlingbury Eſtate to the Univerſity of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which ſhall be diſpoſed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Maſter of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Profeſſor for the time being, or any two of them ſhall agree. Which three perſons aforeſaid ſhall give out a Subject, which Subject ſhall for the firſt Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and ſo the ſucceeding Years, till the Subject is exhauſted; and afterwards the Subject ſhall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of Heart, &c. or whatever elſe may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Maſter of Clare-Hall, and Greek Profeſſor, to be moſt conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they ſhall yearly diſpoſe of the Rent of the above Eſtate to that Maſter of Arts, whoſe Poem on the Subject given ſhall be beſt approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in Engliſh, and to be printed; the expence of which ſhall be deducted out of the product of the Eſtate, and the reſidue given as a reward for the Compoſer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verſes.

WE the underwritten do aſſign Mr. SEATON's Reward, for the Year 1795, to ARTHUR WILLIAM TROLLOPE, M. A. of Pembroke Hall, for his Poem on the DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON; and direct the ſaid Poem to be printed according to the Tenor of the Will.

November 2, 1795.

L. Yates, Vice-Chancellor.
J. Torkington, Maſter of Clare-Hall.

MUSEUM